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VALLEY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

VOLUME 67, ISSUE NO. 9 DECEMBER 5, 2007 IT'S *YOUR* NEWSPAPER

Non-resident Students Get Fee Reduction

BY ASTRID SEIPELT
STAFF WRITER

Non-resident and international students at Valley College will now have the opportunity to pay the same tuition fees as California residents, after a decision made by the Los Angeles Community College District.

Under the new non-resident tuition exemption rule, all non-residents and international students will be exempt from nonresident tuition fees, $173 for non-residents and $183 for international students, if they are taking six units or less in the college district. The rule comes into effect Jan. 1, 2008.

"The primary reason this rule was adopted was because of concurrently enrolled high school students," said Florentino Manzano, dean of enrollment management. "High school students who were not residents of California were required to pay the additional fees, and the board ruled that all non-residents would be exempt as to not discriminate."

There are several restrictions on the tuition exemption. International students can only be exempt from nonresident fees during the summer and winter intersessions, as those students are not permitted to drop below a full-time course load (12 units or more) during fall and spring semesters, unless authorized by the school. Also, if the student, whether international or nonresident, goes above six units, they will be charged nonresident tuition for all units taken.

"This is beneficial for any student who can take six units or less," said Jake Bowers, president of the International Student Club on cam-

see *Fees* page 2

PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR/ VALLEY STAR

LINING UP TO PAY- If students aren't paying for classes, they're getting transit fees paid or some other matter that requires their money. Valley College psychology major Elizabeth Casarez, 20, is ready to to make a transaction with Leonora Ramos in the campus Business Office.

PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE- Writer Gore Vidal, 82, who generates electricity at his Hollywood Hills home using solar eneregy, speaks at the Los Angeles Community College District Sustainability Conference, Nov. 30, at the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

Green is Color du Jour at Forums

BY JAMES BENNETT AND OSCAR CHICAS
STAFF WRITERS

A broad mosaic of students, businesses and community college administrators assembled at the Alternative Energies Panel and the Los Angeles Community College Sustainability Conference to discuss matters of personal, community college and global sustainability. The panelists addressed the means to a green and sustainable personal life, the district's environmental accomplishments and aspirations, and how the aforementioned impact the world at large.

In 2017, the world's oceans will be home to 10 percent of the life that once thrived in 1950. Rick Fedrizzi of the U.S. Green Building Council speculated that in the near future, more food will be grown and broken down into fuel than grown to fill the mouths of the hungry. By 2030 co2 emissions will increase by 60 percent unless serious proactive changes occur.

Gore Vidal spoke at the LACCD Sustainability Conference, acerbically recalling the bureaucratic quagmire surrounding his effort to install a solar array. "[The Department of Water and Power] made every effort to stop me." Vidal liberated himself from the utility companies by powering his home via photovoltaic panels. "I don't like being controlled by anyone. That's part of being American." Sustainable construction and living reduces co2 emissions by 50 percent, cuts water use in half and energy consumption by a third. Not only does it mitigate carbon emissions and conserve finite resourc-

see *Conference* page 2

Valley's Web Site Gets New Look

BY ELIZEDA BELTRAN
STAFF WRITER

While Valley College students enjoyed a weekend break, Valley unveiled its newly re-designed Web site Dec. 1 that features a new navigation system.

"I hope that students and the campus community will find the Web site more useful, more helpful and attract more students who want to come to Valley College," said Jennifer Fong, the school's public relations specialist. "What [is seen on Dec. 1 is] the first stage, as time goes on we will be updating and adding more links that students need."

The fresh look is part of a district-wide re-design project; all nine Los Angeles community college campuses will launch new sites. Valley's revised appearance has been in the works since 2006, and it is the second campus after Mission College to change its online visage.

Although not all Web pages have been remodeled, the majority of links on the homepage lead to re-designed sections. A student button leads users to pages where they can find links for transcripts, the bookstore, online catalogs, and other resources. The student-friendly site also features a video testimonial.

"I like it, it is visually pleasing and easier to navigate compared to the other one," said Rob Lee, a Valley student. "It's more organized; however, there's a huge list of links [in the student section] and it would be better if the headers just had sublinks."

The change has also made the Web site easier to update. Previously, five people contributed to the upkeep of the site; there will now be 25 people maintaining the school's Web page.

"Because a lot of people can edit it, it means that it's gonna be updated more often," said Jorge Mata, manager of information technology who joined this project in March 2007. "You can only survive [outdated information on the school's Web site] a few times before you say that you don't want to go there anymore. If you look at students that come at night, they come in, do their thing and then leave, so how they see Valley is mostly through our Web site."

An "events" section at the bottom of the homepage will make sure to keep students up-to-date with campus activities.

Mata also encourages students to participate in the Web site makeover through the Associated Student Union.

Jorge Resendez, Commissioner of Public Relations, represents students in the Technology committee, which oversees the development and expansion of campus technology. The committee holds a meeting once a month on Wednesdays inside the Learning Center at 2 p.m. Students can attend, but voting is restricted to the representative.

"If students have suggestions they can come and talk to me and I can take the [ideas] to the meeting," said Resendez. "I'm open to suggestions all the time ... [students] can just come into the office."

The ASU offices are located in Campus Center room 102.

GRACIE SALGADO / VALLEY STAR

NO PLACE TO HANG A PICTURE-The Valley College art gallery is still waiting for the construction renovations to be finished so it can re-open to show the artistic side of Los Angeles Valley College students and others.

College Construction Progresses

BY ASTRID SEIPELT AND KRISTEN BECKER
STAFF WRITER

Ongoing construction around Valley College, while mostly on schedule, has met some delays.

According to Valley President Tyree Weider, the new Allied Health Center, as well as the recent renovations on the Music and Art buildings, have been set back.

"[The Art and Music buildings] did not go as smoothly as we would have liked," said Weider. "There was a lot of finishing up to do in those buildings going into the fall semester."

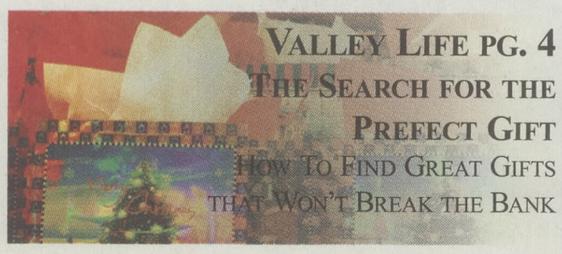
Dennis Reed, dean of fine arts, said that the delays with the art building have caused much frustration amoung faculty.

"It made teaching difficult for faculty because they had to work around construction and without equipment that they were expecting to use," said Reed. "I think everyone is frustrated and is anxiously awaiting the completion of this project."

Reed believes that the delays were caused by not allowing enough time to complete the renovations.

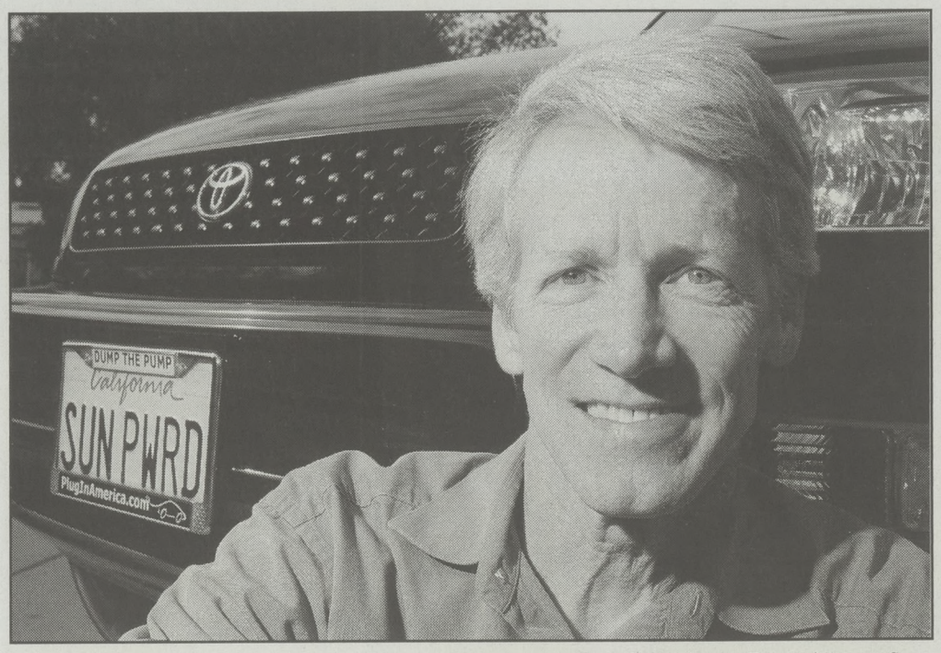
"Two and one-half months was an unreasonable construction schedule from the outset, in my opinion. The Art Building is more compli-

OPINION PG. 3
FREE SPEECH WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT
HOUSE VOTE WILL DECIDE WHAT FREE SPEECH INCLUDES


VALLEY LIFE PG. 4
THE SEARCH FOR THE PREFECT GIFT
HOW TO FIND GREAT GIFTS THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK

VALLEY LIFE PG. 4
CHRISTMAS PARADE - HOLLYWOOD STYLE
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GATHERS TO WELCOME S

SPORTS PG. 5
MONARCHS OFF TO GOOD START
VALLEY FINALLY HAS A WINNING TEAM



PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

SUN MAN- Paul Scott, who produced the movie, "Who Killed the Electric Car?", spoke at Valley College Thursday, Nov. 29. Scott sits in front of his electirc car which was on display in Monarch Square.

'Conference'

continued from page 1

es, but, as Vidal put it, liberates us from tyranny.

"The first thing you do is to stop wasting," political advocate and co-founder of Plug in America Paul Scott said. He was the guest panelist at Valley College's Alternative Energy Day. Scott is an advocate of solar energy, employing solar panels at his Santa Monica home. In 2006, Scott paid an energy bill of $44.08, covering his house and electric car; -- a 2002 Toyota Rav4 electric vehicle. The economics of his green lifestyle pay off behind the wheel as his electric vehicle traverses 120 to 130 mi on a single charge, the equivalent of 70 cents per gallon.

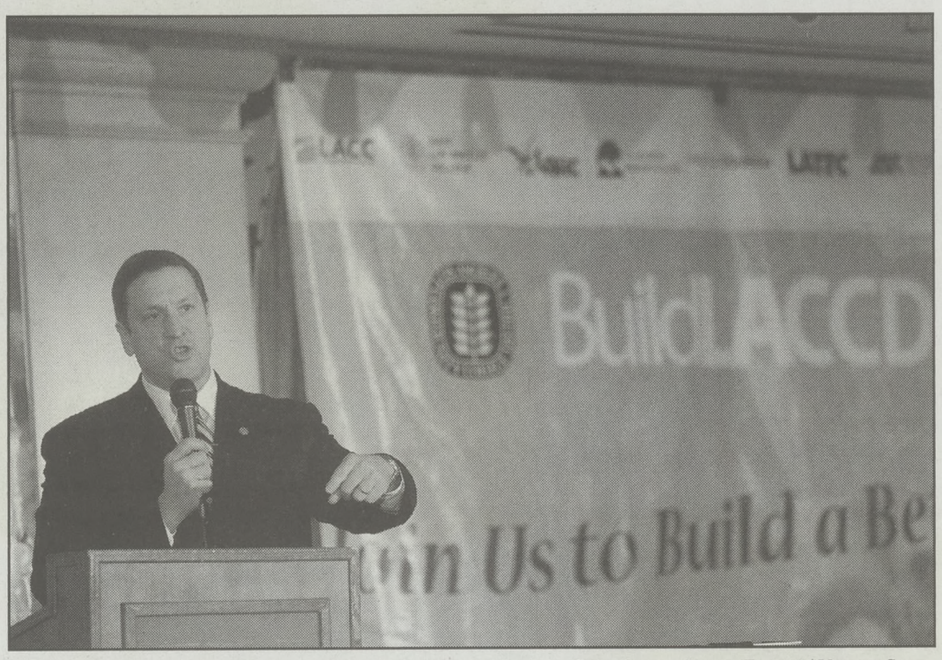
Scott addressed the various ways individuals can live greener lives and reduce their carbon footprint. Energy used for lighting accounts for 20 percent of the average electric bill. He acknowledged that most Valley students are not homeowners and are therefore unable to enjoy the benefits of a personal solar array, but he implored apartment dwellers to switch from incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs, which use 75 percent less energy and last 10 times longer than their incandescent predecessors.

The Los Angeles Community College District recently undertook the largest sustainable building effort in the nation. Funded by the A/AA bond program the district mandates that all new construction projects comply with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) standards. Valley flies the greenest flag amongst the colleges with the first LEED compliant buildings: the Maintenance and Operations facilities and the campus Sheriffs station.

Metrics provided by the U.S. Green Building Council on LEED certified buildings illustrated that students perform 20% better on standardized tests and hospital patients are released 2.5 days earlier. Fedrizzi accredited this increase to the natural light and airflow present in sustainable construction.

The district aspires to proliferate sustainability indoctrination throughout the entire academic spectrum. According to Subodh A. Kumar of the Chartered Facility Management Group, the Los Angeles Community College District hopes to "build a sustainability curriculum into all classes. Everything we do needs to teach students to be green in all facets of their life."

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power offers the "Green Power for a Greener L.A." program to customers wishing to bring renewable energy to the city. By paying an additional 3 cents per kilowatt-hour consumers can buy energy derived exclusively from



PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

MAKING HIS POINT- Rick Fedrizzi, the founding chairman of the U.S. Green Building Council, was the keynote speaker at the Los Angeles Community College District 2007 Sustainability Conference at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles Nov. 30.

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'Construction'

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cated than a simple classroom building," said Reed. "There was too much to do in too little amount of time."

Rinaldo Veseliza, project director of Build LACCD at Valley's construction program, explained why the renovations to the Art Building have taken so long to complete.

"The Music and Art buildings are being utilized with ongoing construction," he said. "It's being done part time because it's being occupied during construction – that is stretching it out. That was previously predicted because of the amount of work needed to be done."

Tyree Wieder attributed the delays in the Allied Health Center to construction problems, and the contractor on campus, URS, is putting on extra work crews in order to meet deadlines.

"All other projects are on schedule." she said.

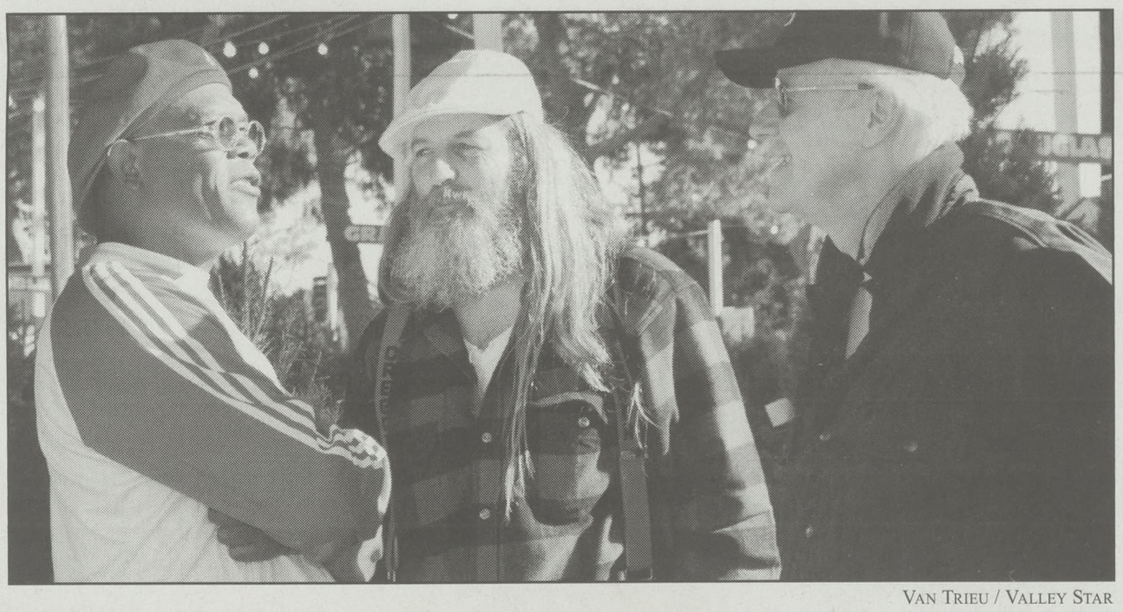
Laurie Nalepa, dean of vocational education, said that steps are being taken to improve communication and prevent any further delays in construction when the Engineering, Math Science and Humanities are renovated over summer 2009.

"A detailed flowchart has been prepared by Rinaldo Visaleza outlining steps to take and who should take them," said Nalepa.

Group leaders from the Engineering and Math Science buildings have already began the ordering process for furniture and equipment. This will help combat any delays in the upcoming renovations.

Though Proposition A/AA will continue until 2011, Reed notes that faculty, staff and students must keep things in perspective.

"When all is said and done, the campus will have an improved building. The students who come through the Art Building in the years to come will not be aware that the construction took a few months longer than expected."



VAN TRIEU / VALLEY STAR

THREE FOR CHRISTMAS-Actor Samuel L Jackson, left, Mark Rohlfs, center, owner of Santa and Sons Chrismas Trees, and actor Mike Farrell, right, take part in the Trees for Troops program at Los Angeles Valley College on December 1. The offer to provide Christmas trees for the families of troops in the U.S. and overseas runs thru Dec. 24 at various tree lots in southern California.

'Fees'

continued from page 1

pus. "On average, an international student pays 9 times the tuition of a California resident, so it is a great opportunity to save some money."

Valley is taking a 'wait and see' approach to the new ruling.

"We are not sure what affect this will have," said Manzano. "But it will be of great benefit to students who previously could not afford the non-resident tuition, they can now begin their education."

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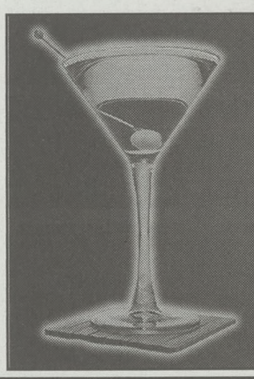

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ONE WAY OR *ANOTHER*

EACH WEEK, THE VALLEY STAR EXAMINES AN ISSUE FROM TWO SIDES.
THIS WEEK: **IS AMERICA READY AND WILLING TO HAVE A WOMAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE?**

Not Ready for Sex Change

BY BRAD TAYLOR
ONLINE EDITOR

New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton is seeking the Democratic nomination to run for president of the United States, but is America ready for a female commander in chief, have we come as far in our modern thinking as we hope? Times have not changed as drastically as Hillary and her spin-doctors are counting on and any woman in the upcoming political race will get trampled. Pragmatism has long been the hallmark of the voting public and voters are not ready to embrace a woman in their boys clubs.

If U.S. history has taught us anything, it is that Americans fear radical change, and we look to our president as an almost mythical figure. Now before you all break out your pitchforks and storm the newsroom, be aware that this is a nation that re-elected George W. Bush, thanks in no small part to conservative small town values.

In our everyday culture the role of the woman is defined as much by tradition as it is by logic. Turning on the television during the afternoon you can see how advertisers view the role of the woman with products like diapers, detergent and deodorant. Even in primetime the show "Commander in Chief" showcasing a female president only lasted 18 episodes, showing that even in fantasy Americans do not accept the idea.

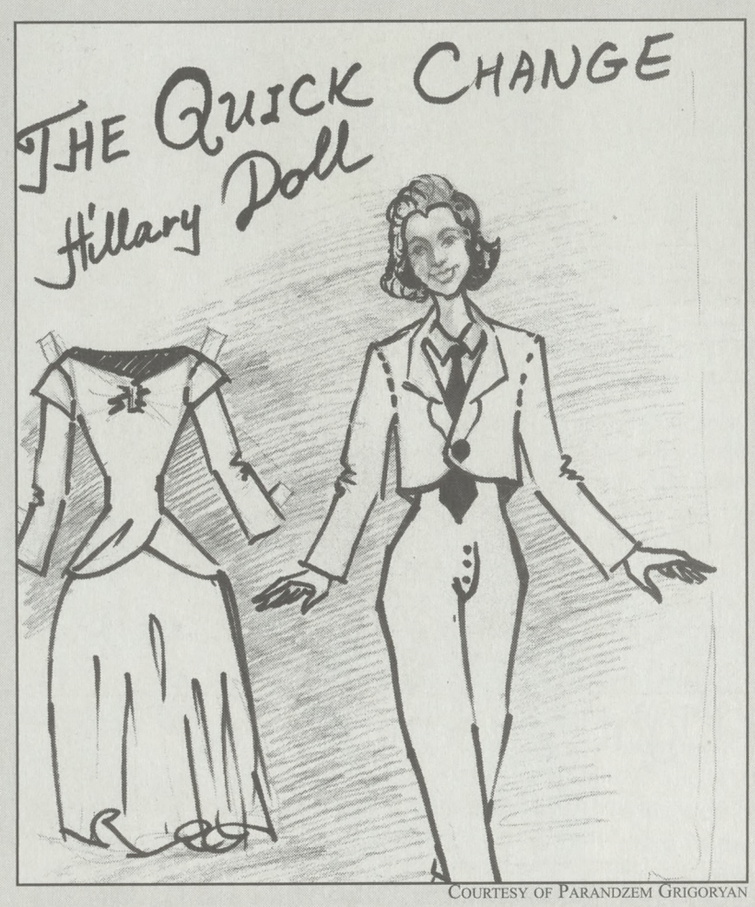
It is easy for educated college students to embrace the concept, but when push comes to shove the younger demographic keeps falling short in voter turnout, while Middle America comes out in force. The new generation of voters is more concerned about how many friends they have on MySpace or how well they play "Guitar Hero" than who is in the Oval Office.

The tightrope that a female must walk in politics is razor thin. Geraldine Ferraro was a strong intelligent woman who ran for vice president in 1984. She was well spoken and articulate and often came under fire by conservatives for being pro-choice. Her poll numbers were high and her debate with Bush sr. was strong but voters still said no.

Unlike a man, a woman must structure her image so that she is not perceived as too feminist or too sexy. And fair or not the news media will be waiting for any excuse to get a sensational headline. Clinton came under fire for a blouse she chose to wear, the media made it seem like she was Janet Jackson at the Super Bowl. But it was Clinton who uttered the quote: "I'm undaunted in my quest to amuse myself by constantly changing my hair."

Also are we really ready for Bill Clinton as first gentleman? This is such a gray area that could really cause a bruise to the male ego. We have no historical basis for a husband in the role taken by powerful women, well other than James Brolin and Kevin Federline.

In the coming months there will be an endless parade of articles praising and condemning the idea of a woman in the White House, the novelty will sell magazines and cause heated debates. No matter how qualified or accomplished Hillary is, the nation is not ready to get over its preconceived notions of gender roles, especially in a time when front page news is Britney Spears' parenting skills and the number one movie in America centers on a fairy tale princess.



COURTESY OF PARANDZEM GRIGORYAN

Gender is not the Real Issue

BY KRISTEN BECKER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Women have made extensive progress in the years since 1920 when they finally received the right to vote. Rather than staying at home, it is hardly surprising to find women in fields that were traditionally dominated by men. Despite this progress, the noise being made about Hillary Clinton's front-runner status for the Democratic presidential nomination is a sign, not of American society's progress toward gender equality, but a sign of how much progress still needs to be made.

Claiming that a woman is qualified for the position for the simple reason that she is a woman harms the women's movement just as much as claiming that a woman is not fit for office based solely on her sex. If there were true equality between the sexes, a woman's gender simply would not be an issue.

When CNN anchor Campbell Brown asked Clinton about accusations that she is wielding the "gender card" to gain an advantage in the campaign, the New York Democrat answered, "Now, I'm not running because I'm a woman, I'm running because I think I'm the best qualified and experienced person to hit the ground running."

While this sentiment is nice, it seems like no one, not even Clinton herself believes it.

Political pundits, her fellow candidates and even the senator herself are making the fact that Clinton is a woman into a campaign issue while there are far more important things this country is facing than whether a man or a woman will be in the Oval Office in 2009.

Choosing a presidential candidate should be about who will do the best job for the country – if a physical trait like gender is going to be the deciding factor, what is stopping voters from considering and debating the importance of hair or eye color when choosing a candidate to support.

During the debate, after describing the enthusiasm of women toward her candidacy, Clinton said, "And to be able to aim toward the highest, hardest glass ceiling is history making." Because of this country's history of oppression of women, the fact that a woman is seen as a viable candidate for president is remarkable, but there are weightier issues that the candidates should be addressing.

Whether it is in the form of her opponents calling her shrill and, in the words of an elderly female McCain supporter "the bitch" or Clinton herself commenting, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. And I'm very much at home in the kitchen," neither are doing much for political debate in this country.

While a Hillary Clinton presidency would be historic, the fact that she would be the United States' first female president should be no more than a footnote. If elected, her sex would most likely end up being as irrelevant as John F. Kennedy's Catholicism was after his election despite fears that he would simply be a proxy for the Pope.

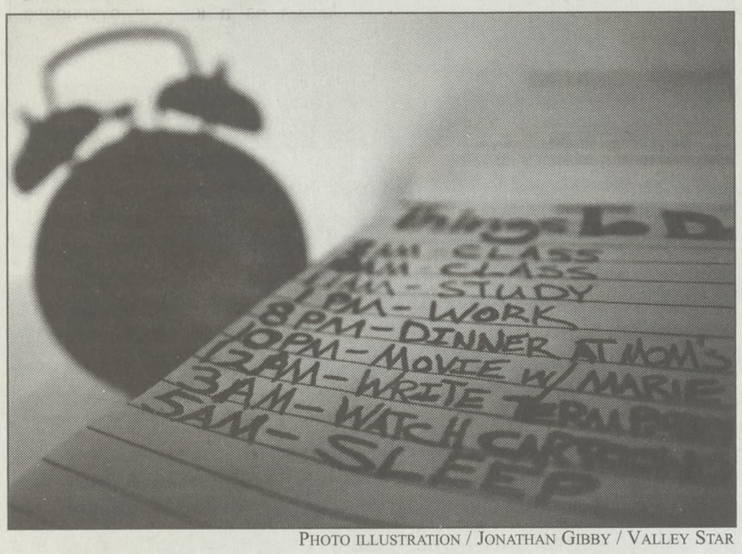


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION / JONATHAN GIBBY / VALLEY STAR

Cheating Sleep Keeps Students Stressed

BY JESSICA RAWSTRON
STAFF WRITER

Beep! Beep! Beep! The 7a.m. alarm goes off, you lay there telling yourself, "just 10 more minutes." The cold water from the shower wakes you up, because you're still half asleep from the all-nighter you tried to pull to study for that anthropology test. Of course this sounds familiar to most, because it's the sleepless, stressful college student life we live.

According to a Brown University study, only 11 percent of college students have good sleep quality, and 73 percent have occasional sleep problems. This same study found that 18 percent of college men and 30 percent of college women reported suffering from insomnia within the past three months, and over half reported feeling sleepy during the morning. These statistics are included in the 40 percent of Americans that are severely sleep deprived, which found that college students are the majority.

Not only are we suffering in our academic and work lives, but we're also making ourselves very vulnerable in other areas. Our moods often sway and our bodies may have a difficult time coping with the personal issues we face outside the classroom. A lack of sleep will make us more susceptible to stress, and will increase already existing stress.

Stress and lack of sleep are fueled by the ever-so popular habit of procrastination. William Knaus, a psychologist, estimated that 90 percent of college students procrastinate. Of these students, 25 percent are chronic procrastinators and they are usually the ones who end up dropping out of college. Students often avoid or ignore their obligations and sleep because of their social lives.

Perhaps if we'd turn off our cell phones and close our Myspace pages, we'd catch a couple more zs. It's funny how we know how important sleep is to us, or at least we pretend to, yet we don't make the time. I wonder if it's simply that there are just not enough hours in the day or if we spend too much time procrastinating, which ultimately keeps us awake all hours of the night.

Tightening Noose on Freedom of Speech

BY ELIZEDA BELTRAN
STAFF WRITER

The incident at Jena High School in Jena, La., involving the hanging of three nooses from a tree, dubbed the "white tree," in Sept. 2006 left many American's like me disgusted. The connotations that come with a hanging noose cannot help but make many people furious, and compel some lawmakers to consider it a crime.

Members of Congress, Al Green (D-TX) and Laura Richardson (R-CA) introduced legislation Nov. 14 and a House vote will take place Dec. 5 that could criminalize the hanging of nooses when used for the purpose of intimidation. The proposal states that such an act would be investigated by Federal agents and have violators severely prosecuted. As much as this racist symbol may awaken the rage in people, trampling on the First Amendment is not the answer. The purpose of the First Amendment is to protect the freedom of speech for everyone, whether you agree with them or not.

A dangling noose is more than just an offensive object; it represents ideas about race that run deep in our country. The focus should be on trying to understand why such acts of racism still occur, not turning a blind eye to them by outlawing the symbol.

To establish that something is "offensive" is difficult because it is dependent on different people's feelings. What might be offensive to me might not be offensive to you. The cross comes packed with offensive and non-offensive ideas. For one, it could be taken as a symbol of charity, of salvation, and compassion. On the other side, it could also mean intolerance of people who have different sexual preferences, of denying women the right to have an abortion, and religious persecution. Anyone can claim to take offense to this and feel intimidated. Should it also be outlawed? And after all, aren't words just symbols of things? If I write "Hitler" someone can accuse me of intimidating them, and then find Federal agents knocking at my door.

However, the proposal is more than just banning a symbol. Restricting a part of free speech is like killing history, erasing the Civil Rights Movement and discrediting the streets that laid witness to the historic changes. It means, shutting down the voices that speak against war. To disgrace the struggles of immigrants who abandoned their countries because they faced political or religious persecution and came to the United States looking for that freedom they were denied. And for me, restricting some aspect of free speech directly attacks my job as a writer for a newspaper. It silences this piece.

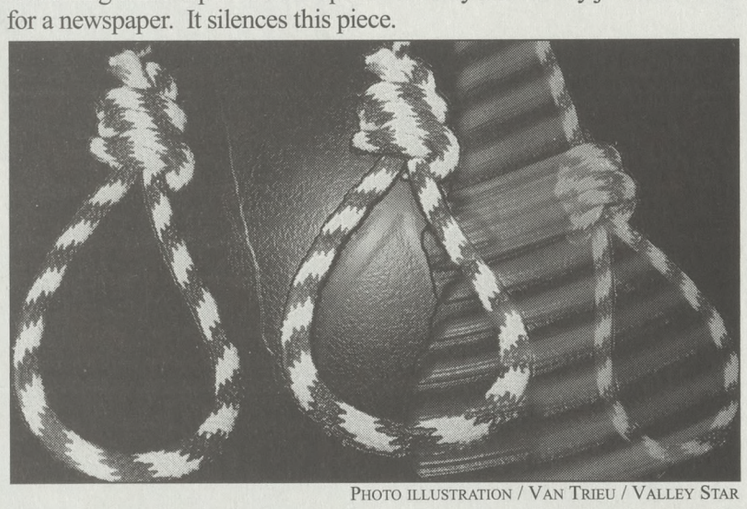


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION / VAN TRIEU / VALLEY STAR

CAMPUS View

Do you think America is ready for a female President?

photos by Paul Olden

"I think it's about time there's a female president. I feel like [Hillary Clinton] will do a good job, especially with her husband as a role model."
- Lesly Paiz, undeclared

"Yeah, why not. It's not bad for a change. It's all about equal opportunity, always. It's good for diversity."
- Wesley Bryant, graphic design

"At this point in time, I don't think so. I feel that our economy isn't strong enough yet. [And] all these years we've had a male figure."
-Jordan Portades, engineering

"Yes. I think it's about time and that [Clinton] will be very capable of running the country. Women are just as capable as men if not more."
- Rachel Jones, child development

VALLEY LIFE

WEDNESDAY TO TUESDAY

What's New Online @ lavalleystar.com

"Kylie Minogue- 'X' Review"
By Brad Taylor

"Incubus- 'Come Alive'"
By Jessica Rawstron

"Pitbull CD Review"
By Sheila Koochak

"I'm Not There"
By Oscar Chicas

New CD Releases:

Mariah Carey- *Sweet Soul Odyssey*

Wyclef Jean- *Carnival II*

Ghostface Killah- *The Big Doe Rehab*

Godsmack – *Good Times, Bad Times*

Too Short- *Get off the stage*

New DVD Releases:

Superbad

Pirates of the Carribean: At World's End

The Nanny Diaries

New Theatre Releases:

Atonement
Keira Knightley

The Golden Compass
Nicole Kdman, Daniel Craig

Juno
Ellen Page, Michael Cera, Jason Bateman, Jennifer Garner

New Book Releases:

Alan Greenspan: The Age of Turbulence

Steve Martin: Born Standing Up

Tom Brokaw: Boom

Don't forget to YouTube:

Fat Kid Pool

Kid Owned in Dodgeball

Dork Walks Into Glass

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Wednesday, December 5
Undecided Major/Career Workshop 5:30-6:30

Thursday, December 6
CSU Los Angeles Rep 10-1
Undecided Major/Career Workshop 1-2

Monday, December 10
5:30-6:30 College Application Workshop

Tuesday, December 11
CSU Northridge Rep 10-1 and 5-7
College Application Workshop 1-2

Wednesday, December 12
Undecided Major/Career Workshop 5:30-6:30

Thursday, December 13
Undecided Major/ Career Workshop 1-2

Christmas Parade with a Hollywood Touch

JAMES BENNETT
STAFF WRITER

JONATHAN GIBBY/ VALLEY STAR

HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS – The Hollywood Christmas Parade featured marching bands from across the nation, television socialites, and yes of course Santa Claus.

"Ho Ho Ho! Now remember folks, stay behind the blue line until the parade has concluded." Comfortably seated in his big green chair atop the North Pole float, Old Saint Nick cruised the streets of Hollywood during the 2007 annual Hollywood Santa Parade. Due to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce cutting funding for the event, private firm Pageantry Productions picked up the tab and refined the list of participants. Despite the parade losing money last year, the price was right for former game show host and Hollywood legend Bob Barker to take on the role of Grand Marshall. The parade featured myriad automobiles, equestrian entertainment, a slew of marching bands, celebrities and local politicians.

In true Hollywood style, the parade commenced with a police chase; well, not exactly. The first tires to hit the boulevard belonged to a large motorcycle club, followed shortly thereafter by a procession of historical LAPD patrol cars and mounted officers. The Derby Dolls roller derby team skated down the parade line, but didn't bodycheck anyone.

Diverging from tradition, this year's collection of marching bands hailed exclusively from California schools. The bands bumped their brass, donked their drums, and spun their batons throughout the course of the evening. The US Marine Corps Marching Band and Lowrider procession, the award-winning Kaiser High School marching band, and the marvelously attired Banning High School marching band mark the more notable performances among the 17 participants. "I love the gorgeous music," said Ana Calderon of San Pedro. "They remind us that Christmas is here."

Numerous celebrities and politicians maneuvered between the blue lines of the parade route. Big names like Rip Taylor, the Cheetah Girls, and Menudo waved to droves of cheering fans. Cesar Millan, the dog whisperer appeared in the parade and made sure everyone's pets were in a calm, submissive state. Antonio Villaraigosa cruised down the boulevard alongside a handful of city council members.

The parade pandered to the unusual tastes of Hollywood's unusual people. People like Alexandra Collins, "I liked the llamas, the horses, the dancing horses; but I really liked the llamas." Aside from the usual fanfare, the parade presented some odd exhibitors. Oddities such as a procession of pony-powered rickshaws, a float for the recently-completely LA Country Fair, and more rickshaws; only this time pulled by llamas. Hollywood is full of weirdoes, parades not exempt.

"My favorite parts of the parade were the celebrities. I liked seeing the Cheetah Girls and especially Menudo," said Reina Serna of La Puente. "I think there should be more celebrities and less marching bands." More celebrities, less bands were the common sentiment amongst parade-goers. Not only more celebrities, but bigger names. Many observers commented that they didn't recognize more than half of the alleged celebrities they saw throughout the evening.

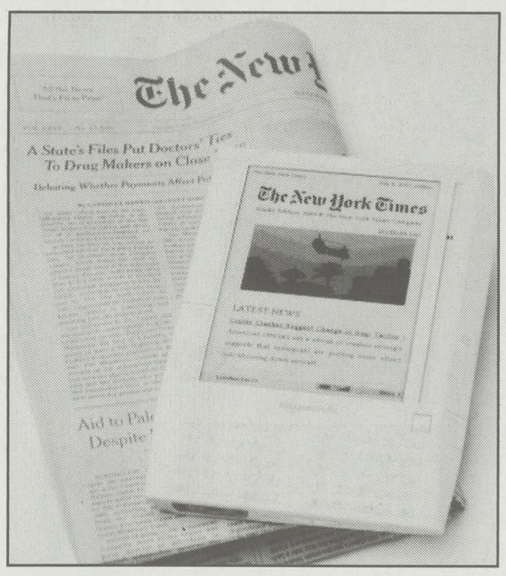
The parade concluded with Santa Claus, kindly reminding people to stay behind the blue line marked on the pavement. I thought Santa Claus gave out presents, not warnings.

Kindle Doesn't Light Student's Fire

ELIZEDA BELTRAN
STAFF WRITER

One trip to your nearest Best Buy is all it takes to witness how everything is going digital and gadgets are being designed around the size of one's palm. First the CD player was replaced with an iPod, and now if Jeff Bezos, chief executive of Amazon, has his way, books may lose their tangibility.

The Kindle, an electronic book reader with a six-inch screen, launched on Nov. 19 by Amazon may have the potential to replace bookshelves in the future. Although e-book already has a waiting list, and will be shipped on a first-come, first-serve basis, students like Meagan Judkins, a foreign language major, are not exactly getting on the list.



COURTESY OF AMAZON.COM

A NEW WAY TO READ-The Kindle's 6-inch screen allows a user to read books, magazines, news papers and other printed material.

"This is not blowing my mind," said Judkins. "I don't see this as a stepping-stone, or something revolutionary . . . I wouldn't buy it."

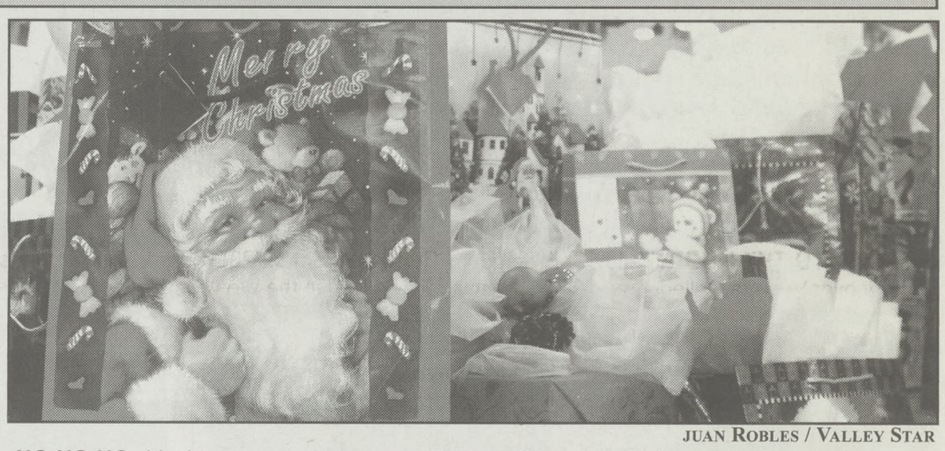
The Kindle is a 10.3 ounce white plastic gadget that lets people carry hundreds of books in one convenient small device. Consumers can download books through Kindle without the use of a computer because the gadget comes with free wireless connection. Amazon has made available more than 90,000 book titles for readers to choose from. Some of the books include, Stephen Colbert's "I Am America (And So Can You!)," "Fair Game: My Life as a Spy, My Betrayal by the White House," by Valerie Plame, and Christopher Hitchen's "God is not Great."

Users simply type in a title, author's name, or keyword in the search bar to find a book and download it within a minute. The e-book features a paper like screen that works using ink, just like in books, except that the ink is displayed electronically, which makes it easier on the eyes. And readers neednot worry about not being able to mark their electronic books, the Kindle lets them add notes.

In addition, books, even new releases, cost just $9.99. The Kindle can store 200 books at once. But this new technology comes with a price tag of $399.

Gevork Shatarevian, a Business Administration major, echoed the same sentiment. "I wouldn't buy it, it is too pricey."

"I do use Amazon to buy books for my classes because of the high prices, so maybe selling textbooks would make a difference," Shatarevian added. "It would make it better."



JUAN ROBLES / VALLEY STAR

HO HO HO- It's time to start thinking about what gifts to buy during the holiday season.

WANTED: The Perfect X-Mas Gift

ASTRID SEIPELT, STAFF WRITER

As well as you may know someone, it can be like pulling teeth trying to find them the perfect yuletide present. Giving creative and offbeat gifts can be the perfect solution to this problem.

A charm bracelet is a cute and quirky gift that can show your mother or sister how much you care. Almost every jewelry store sells bracelets and charms in different precious metals so you can choose charms based on what they like or things that remind you of her.

Best friends are there through everything, so a great way to show the strength of your friendship is through a hand made photo album. Pick out photos from the length of your friendship and mix them in with quotes, pictures from magazines and other mementos. You can even write a note in the front cover dedicating the album to them. This gift idea is inexpensive, but ultimately it's extremely thoughtful and is something that your "BFF" can keep for a long time.

If you know someone who is a philanthropist; making a donation to their favorite charity in lieu of a physical gift would go over well. There are many organizations, such as the Salvation Army and Goodwill who work overtime during the holidays to help out those who are in need. Your friend (and those less fortunate) will truly appreciate it.

While we can't see too many stars in the sky here in Los Angeles, having a star named after a family member or friend is a gift that will sparkle forever. Starregistry.com lets you pick what constellation the star comes from, and the recipient of your gift receives a certificate saying where their star is located. After they know where to look, you can take them to the Griffith Observatory to get a closer look at their new namesake.

Lastly, we all have loved one that is all work and not play. An "I owe you" day is perfect for helping them have some fun they would not normally have. Wrap up a box for them to open Christmas morning, and inside place a list of activities they can choose from. Put a range of things that are in your budget, from dinner and a movie if your budget is tight, to a day of paintballing if you have money to burn.

Top 5: Holiday Films that Unearth the Spirit of Yuletide

BRAD TAYLOR, ONLINE EDITOR

Yes, I know you all want to see "Christmas Story" again and again, but before you watch little Ralphie in his pink bunny suit or cry when Charlie Brown picks out his sad tree, take some time to watch these top five hidden holiday treasures.

5-Emmet Otter's Jug-band Christmas (1977)

Jim Henson directed this rarely seen Christmas special based on the children's book of the same name. Kermit the Frog tells the story of forest Muppets who learn deeper lessons of the holiday season that have nothing to do with presents or religion.. The special is better than the traditional "Muppet Christmas Carol" thanks in no small part to having the "real" Muppet voices provided by Jim Henson

4-The Star Wars Holiday Special (1978)

Thanks to the miracle of YouTube, we can finally see the spectacle that is the Steve Binder directed sci-fi holiday classic. Viewers will find out about the Wookie holiday "Life Day," the Star Wars version of Christmas that involves something called the "Tree of Life." We also get to meet Chewbacca's family and find out he has a son named Lumpy. All your favorite Star Wars players are here too, from Luke and Han to the official first appearance of Boba Fett. However, nothing compares to Carrie Fisher singing the "Life Day" song George Lucas' holiday wish is probably that no one ever sees this again.

COURTESY OF AMAZON.COM

3-A Smokey Mountain Christmas (1986)

Fonzie himself; Henry Winkler directs Dolly Parton and Lee Majors in this over the top movie that finds Dolly stretching her acting chops as a country singer who gets stuck in the Tennessee mountains with seven orphans. Not sold yet? Lee (Six Million Dollar Man) Majors comes to the rescue as Mountain Dan, a backwoods guy who must save Dolly and the kids from a snow witch. Watching this movie is sure to put you to sleep on Christmas Eve, but no one sings Christmas tunes like Dolly Parton.

2-South Park Christmas (1997)

When the citizens of South Park tear apart the holiday season it is up to Mr. Hankey, the Christmas Poo to set things right. Kyle's song, "The Lonely Jew on Christmas" really tugs on the heartstrings and the usually doomed Kenny survives to celebrate, which really brings Christmas close to a person.

1-Pee-Wee's Playhouse Christmas (1988)

The ultimate holiday extravaganza celebrates Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and everything in between. Guest stars Cher, Oprah, Charro, Whoopi Goldberg, Grace Jones, and Little Richard all drop by the playhouse to celebrate, sing and learn the joys of the holidays. Pee-Wee teaches how to make greeting cards with potatoes, and creates a new wing of the playhouse out of fruitcake. No other holiday special is as campy, fun or downright bizarre.

WSC MEN'S BASKETBALL

Up and Down Week for Valley Basketball

By Kim Duran and Jonathan Gibby
Staff Writers

The Valley College men's basketball team wrapped up its first ten games of the season with a 7-3 record after dropping a 102-94 decision at Los Angeles Trade Tech last Saturday.

Last Wednesday, the Monarchs won their first home game by stopping Ventura College, 100-94.

While winning seven of their first ten games is a good start, the Monarchs still have some work to do to match the 10-0 start by Citrus College in the Western State Conference South Division.

In the game at Trade Tech, the Monarchs led the Beavers for the first few minutes, but a defensive breakdown led to Tech taking over the game.

"We got caught up playing their game instead of ours," Valley College Coach Virgil Watson said.

The Monarchs shot poorly from the free throw line and that shortcoming contributed to their demise.

The loss snapped a four game winning streak for the Monarchs that started with an 83-81 win over Gavilan College at the Consumnes River Tournament in Sacramento Nov. 18 and continued with wins against Moorpark, San Bernardino and Ventura College.

The win over Ventura marked the home debut of the Monarchs for the 2007-08 season.

Valley pressured the Pirates with a sticky man-to-man defense and the Monarchs did a good job of preventing easy shots near the basket.

Valley guards played well. Gino Riney constantly beat his defender and scored 20 points by mostly connecting on several high-percentage shots.

"We got caught up playing their game instead of ours."

-Valley College Coach Virgil Watson

Riney's backcourt teammate, Germel Coleman, led all scorers with 35 points. Coleman ranks third in the WSC with a 20.8 ppg average.

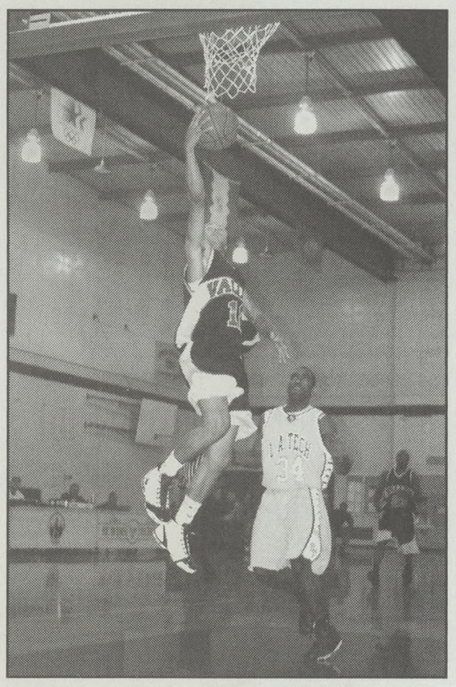
In a key first-half sequence, Coleman and guard Chris Horstman made back to back 3-pointers to keep the momentum from shifting to the Pirates.

The Monarchs also earned several points off turnover with steals and offensive rebound baskets. Valley College led by 50-40 at halftime.

The Monarchs started the second-half of the game by having trouble holding onto the ball. But after a couple of turnovers, Valley's defensive pressure resulted in two offensive fouls by the pirates and a backcourt violation.

The Pirates and Monarchs were separated by just four points at a late stage of the game, but Valley was able to stave off the challenge and won the game.

"I'm really proud [of these guys], said assistant coach Nate Connor. "We've been playing well as of late," he said.



Jonathan Gibby / Valley Star

FLYING MONARCH – Valley College guard Bo Bennet (12) flies to the hoop during the Monarchs 102-94 loss to Los Angeles Trade Tech College, Dec. 1.

And beating Ventura College was an accomplishment in and of itself.

" … This is the first time we've beaten Ventura in … I don't know how long, Conner said. "We got over our hump today."

The Monarchs hit the road for the Santa Barbara Tournament Dec. 6-8. After playing in the Mt. San Jacinto College Tournament Dec. 28-30, Valley visits Irvine College and Santa Monica College, before playing their next home game against Glendale College, Jan. 12.

Paul Olden, Photo Editor / Valley Star

STRONG TO THE HOOP- Valley College guard Germel Coleman (23) scored 35 points in leading the Monarchs to a 100-94 home victory over Ventura College, Nov. 28. Coleman ranked third in the Western State Conference in scoring at 20.8 ppg.

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GALLERY

FLAG- Every 10 years, the city of Los Angeles celebrates Mexican culture by having a party at La Placita Olvera.

THE ESSENCE OF MEXICO

Photos and text by Juan Robles

Thanks to the city of Los Angeles and places like La Placita Olvera, people get to experience Mexican culture and its traditions. La Placita Olvera has many restaurants, shops, churches, and museums that capture the essence of Mexico at its best.

For those who wish to expand their horizon and experience Mexican culture, La Placita Olvera is located in Downtown Los Angeles.

SAY A PRAYER- Many worshipers who come to Our Lady Queen Of Angels Church to ask for forgiveness or for the well being of their families.

MY CULTURE IN CLAY- Rosa Peña has been working at La Placita Olvera for over nine years selling clay figures that come from all parts of Mexico.

AZTEC DANCER- Every Saturday and Sunday, Daniel Bonilla performs many traditional Aztec dances for tourists.

TRIO- Carlos, Nestor, and La Golondrina play a Corrido for tourists who are sitting down. The trio has been playing at La Placita Olvera for more than 15 years.